F 73
.4
.B63
Copy 1

Blackstone

Boston's First Inhabitant

Amory

WILLIAM BLACKSTONE

Boston's First Inhabitant

By Thomas C. Amory

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
COPYRIGHT
No. 14068 H

Copyright, 1877.
ROCKWELL & CHURCHILL,
Boston.

Rockwell & Churchill, Printers, 39 Arch Street, Boston.

TO

The Old South Meeting House:

ONE OF THE FEW REMAINING MONUMENTS OF OUR PROVINCIAL PERIOD, OF EVENTS AND MEN THAT HELPED TO ESTABLISH OUR NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE AND FREE INSTITUTIONS, THIS TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY OF

William Blackstone,

THE EARLIEST INHABITANT OF BOSTON, WHO ALSO LOVED LIBERTY, CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS, IS

Respectfully Dedicated.

"ESTO PERPETUA."

What is Known of Blackstone.

For several years previous to the first settlement of Boston, in September, 1630, William Blackstone, its earliest European inhabitant, occupied by himself what formed for long afterwards the principal part of it, and which was then known as Shawmut. It comprised an area of about eight hundred acres, since more than doubled by accessions from the sea that surrounded it, the whole, with much besides annexed to our city from the country round about, now crowded with population. Blackstone, a man of learning, an ordained minister of the Church of England, and, consequently, a graduate of one of its universities, unwilling to conform to ecclesiastical requirements which his conscience disapproved, had come to America "to get from under the power of the lords bishops." Here he dwelt, solitary and alone, raising his apples and roses, and reading his books, of which he had a plentiful supply.

His solitude was unpleasantly disturbed in the summer of 1630 by the arrival at Charlestown, across the river, of Winthrop and his company, under their patent of March 4, 1629. Their lives in peril from disease engendered by exposure and privation, and aggravated by the impurity of the water, he generously invited them over to share with him the more salubrious spot he inhabited, and which abounded in springs.

Cheerfully yielding up to them the greater part of his possessions, he was contented himself to retain fifty acres, and six more adjacent, whereon stood his house. Our story intimates how it chanced that, a few years afterwards, "finding he had fallen under the power of the lords brethren," he surrendered the larger lot and all his rights within the then narrow neck of land connecting the peninsula with Roxbury,

except his six acres. He received six shillings from each householder, and, in some instances, larger sums in voluntary contributions, for this release. It has been said that he disclaimed any other title but that of first discoverer and occupant, but this payment shows that the colonists considered that title to some extent, at least, valid or equitable. In 1623, the Council of New England had patented to Robert Gorges ten miles along the north-east shore of Massachusetts Bay, by thirty inland, with all islands, not previously granted, within three miles of the main land. Walford, at Charlestown; Maverick, on what is now East Boston; Thompson, who died in 1628, on the island that still bears his name; Blackstone, at Shawmut, are supposed to have held under this patent, and been pioneers of a projected plantation.

Sir Ferdinando Gorges had received large grants from the Council farther north; and, interested in the speedy colonization of the country, caused his son Robert to surrender his patent, and another issued, vesting in Winthrop and his associates what it covered, with the rest of Massachusetts, outside the limits of Plymouth, to the western sea. John Blackstone, a member of Parliament, appears to have taken an active interest in the affairs of the infant plantations. As one of a parliamentary committee, in 1642, he invited Cotton, Hooker, and Davenport to come over for consultation upon the general condition of the realm. As one of the Council, he joined in a power to William Blackstone to deliver seisin under one of its patents. No consanguinity is known between John and William; but their bearing the same name justifies the conjecture that such existed; that our first settler did actually possess claims entitled to compensation for their relinquishment; and that John's position in the Council may have led William to take up his residence in New England, when constrained by conscience to abandon the Church.

Whereabouts, precisely, on the peninsula was his dwelling-place has long puzzled our historians. An early authority (Lechford) speaks of his residing on Blackstone's Point, on

Cambridge Bay, opposite the mouth of Charles River. It seems not to have occurred to Shaw, Snow, Drake, and Shurtleff that his name might attach at that period to all Shawmut; and, regarding Barton's Point as what was intended, they located his house variously on Poplar or Cambridge streets or a mile away in the vicinity of Charlestown Bridge. The publication of Odlin's deposition, dated June 10, 1684, recorded with Suffolk Deeds, 26–84, as to Blackstone's release, discouraged the hope that further information might be gleaned by examination of these ancient volumes. The correspondence in area of the lot reserved by Blackstone, or assigned to him in 1631, and that appropriated soon after his surrender as a common and training-field, and of his six-acre lot to that conveyed by Copley to Harrison Gray Otis and Jonathan Mason, in 1791, long since led the present writer to the conclusion that our beautiful Common was no other than his park and pasture; that his orchard lay close by, and was substantially the same laid down as Bannister's gardens, on Burgiss' map of 1728, and that his house stood on the ground bounded by Beacon, Walnut, and Spruce streets, near to which latter street the sea then ebbed and flowed.

Under the impression that his connection with our early history was too interesting an episode not to be kept in mind, the subject shaped itself into the present form; and whilst thus engaged, another effort was made to procure, if possible, such additional light as the Suffolk Registry afforded. No conveyance is there believed to be recorded of the six-acre lot before 1719, when Bannister mortgaged it, then eight acres, for two hundred pounds. But by the help of the last publication of the Record Commission, and Classified Index to Deeds prior to 1800, the deposition of Mrs. Ann Pollard, the first of Winthrop's company, as mentioned in the text, to leap ashore upon the peninsula, and who lived till 1725, when she had reached the age of one hundred and five, stood revealed. Strange to say, it was upon the same page as that of Odlin, so much better known. It states that Blackstone sold

his homestead to Richard Pepys, who built a house on the land, of which her husband was the tenant, and possibly Pepys may have occupied another himself on the property. When Copley conveyed it, in 1791, two ancient houses stood upon the estate, in one of which he painted many of his admirable portraits, and there his distinguished son, Lord Chancellor Lyndhurst, was born.

The area then actually passing came nearer to twenty acres than six, the ordinance of 1647 giving proprietors of the upland one hundred rods below high-water mark.

Pepys may have gone home at the restoration of the monarchy, or earlier. We do not know that he was not the same Richard Pepys, cousin of Samuel, the entertaining diarist, and the Irish judge of 1664, from whom Lord Cottenham, chancellor in 1836–41, and a successor of Lyndhurst, descended. It would be agreeable to trace, in addition to those associations of great legal luminaries with the spot, yet another of the kind, and discover that our Blackstone was of the same family as his namesake, Sir William, the distinguished commentator on the Laws of England, whose volumes never grow old and are ever pleasant to read, and who was born in London, son of Charles, in 1723, and died in 1780. The son of our William had sons, one of whom, a lieutenant, fell at the siege of Louisburg, in 1746. The only promising clue to the parentage and birthplace of our first inhabitant is a power, in 1653, of Sarah Blackstone (Suffolk Deeds) to collect money advanced, in which she is described as of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and which mentions the name of Stevenson, that of the first husband of Blackstone's wife.

In 1638 the authorities granted Blackstone fifteen acres at Muddy Brook, now Brookline, then a part of the town of Boston. He may have continued still a freeholder, possibly not have sold his estate, but it is generally presumed that he left with his cattle and books for Rehoboth in the spring of 1635. In a house he called Study Hall, a few rods from the river now bearing his name, on the declivity of what he called

Study Hill, about sixty feet in elevation, he resided the rest of his days. Miantonimo, nephew of Canonicus, king of the Narragansetts, Ocamsequin or Massasoit, king of Wampanoags, were his friends, as also their sons Canonchet and king Philip, and his influence may have, during his life, averted the calamity of Indian hostilities which broke out soon after his death. That event took place May 26, 1675, when he had reached the age of fourscore.

He occasionally visited Boston and Providence, and preached in the latter place, and at Boston, in 1659, before Gov. Endicott, married Mrs. Sarah Stevenson, widow of John, who died in June, 1673. His only child, John, sold the two hundred acres at Rehoboth, in 1693, to the Whipples, who very recently owned them. The house, barns, and books — nearly two hundred in number, quartos and folios, and some Latin — were burnt by the Indians in 1676, one of their few victories having been gained not far from Study Hill. In the conflagration of his house perished his manuscript volumes and other papers, very possibly of great interest. His grave, near the site of his dwelling, may be still marked by stones at the head and foot; but he should have appropriate monuments raised to his memory both there and here.

If to be deplored that our first inhabitant did not leave his own monuments in word and deed, if his life coursed on and left no waif behind it, there is much in his character and career for respectful admiration. Conscientious, noble, and generous, his intellectual pursuits, love of nature, cultivation of the earth, and subjection of the lords of the pasture to his bidding, his courage and faith strike sympathetic chords. Nor should his preference of seclusion to the busy world be condemned without remembering what that world was which he abandoned. A self-complacent, perfidious tyrant on the throne, besotted with indulgence, merciless from impunity, robbing his subjects to enrich favorites that imprisoned or beheaded, or worse, at their will or his own; a people that tamely submitted; a Church of rite and dogma without Christi-

anity, — from this seething caldron of corruption emerged later the furies of retribution; and minister, primate, and another king, his son, quite as arbitrary, went to the block. No marvel that the howl of the wild beast of the forest and the yell of the savage lost their terrors; or that the good seed separated from the chaff and came here to plant. The recluse, grown sensitive to rude contact with his kind, strove in vain to conquer his repugnance and become as other men. He neglected no opportunity to do them service, but valued too highly his own independence to submit to their dictation. Circumstance and Providence had circumscribed his paths, and he had not the motive and, perhaps, not the strength to open others for himself.

WILLIAM BLACKSTONE.

HIGH on an eminence he stood,
His thoughts beyond the sea,
For he had left his native land
That he might here be free, —
Free from the thrall of unjust laws,
Far from a despot king,
Prelates whose haughty will would all
To like subjection bring.
Too true and honest to accept
What conscience disapproved,
Its dictates he obeyed, and left
All that at home he loved.
If his from all the world to choose,
Surely no lovelier spot
Than where our three-hilled city stands
To dwell, all else forgot.
The sylvan scene around, beneath,
He claimed it as his own,
Nor cared, while Providence protects,
That he was there alone.

Not quite alone ; the curling smoke —
Near hills like smoke in hue —
Marked where a noble sachem dwelt,
He found both kind and true.

Save him, and one across the bay,
One, whose island home lay near,
He lived a solitary man,
No kindred soul to cheer.
Nor had he need; his well-stored mind,
Books rich with precious lore,
His sea-girt home of hill and dale,
He asked from Heaven no more.
Whatever worth his while to know,
Or Old World could impart,
In college cloisters he had learned, —
A priest of guileless heart.

In times when every rank, degree,
Appropriate garments wore,
His priestly garb made plain to sight
The sacred name he bore.
From Merrymount or Plymouth Rock
Did saint or sinner stray,
He gave them of his frugal meal,
And sped them on their way.
The mocker stayed his ribald jest;
The Indian bowed his head;
All recognized the man of God,
Who shared with him his bread.

Years came and went, his chief delight
To watch the seasons change,
To fish or fowl along the shore,
Or neighboring hills to range;
Cull cress and herb, and mark the Spring

Her measured mazes tread,
Mayflower, violet, eglantine,
Each morn new odor shed;
Roses from home, that cherished ties
Kept in perennial bloom,
Carols awakening memories
Which living forms assume.

He roams the woods, and tracks the deer
Through winter's drift of snow,
Or on its crust, in snow-shoes glides
With every pulse aglow;
Now mid the summer moonbeams floats
Upon the waters wide
That washed up to his cottage door,
With each returning tide.

His trees in spring perfume the breeze,
In autumn yield their fruit;
If no Eve there with him to share,
Serpent to bruise his foot,
His Eden ground requites his toil,
Each moderate want supplies;
With grateful heart received what sent,
Nor craved what God denies.

When frosty days the night closed in
He sought his sheltered nook,
Beside the blazing logs to muse,
Or con his favorite book;
Little he dreamed that Copley's brush,

Where stood his humble cot,
Should one day magic works create,
Not to be soon forgot.
Yet still perchance, as lulled the storm,
The stirring tones he hears
Of Lyndhurst's matchless eloquence,
Thrice chief among his peers;
Nor only famous for his birth,
His eye prophetic scanned
A throng of men since known to fame,
Whose homes stood close at hand:
Otis, of honeyed eloquence;
Channing, from heaven astray;
Prescott, of lucid narrative;
Motley and Phillips play;
And merchant princes, bold and wise,
Warm heart and liberal hand,
Who reaped rich harvests from the seas
To enrich their native land.
Might one but tell their honored names,
Refinement, culture, worth,
What brighter spot than his own home
To illuminate the earth?

And, as the flickering embers cast
Strange shadows on his walls,
The dreamer saw those walls expand
Into palatial halls,
Where golden youth, whose thrifty sires
Worked that their sons might play,
With merry laugh and pleasant chat

Beguile the hours away.
He saw before their windows spread
A paradise of shade,
Where lake and turf cooed lovingly
And gleaming fountains played.
And all around, in myriad forms,
A glorious city grown,
Of thrice a hundred thousand souls,
Whose fame through earth is known;
With freedom, faith, and culture blest
To bloom till time grows old, —
The fairest rose that decks our orb
Were half its marvels told.
Perhaps the lifted clouds disclosed
Much that to us is dim, —
A future as much more wondrous still
As what is now to him.

Yet not alone glad themes like these
Possessed his busy thought,
Which, wandering back in fancy, traced
What all such marvels wrought.
A nation angry with its king
Who would a tyrant be;
That gory head, the bloody axe;
Sure now they must be free.
Ah, no! not yet the lesson taught,
Not yet is earned the prize,
They first must learn to rule themselves,
Be honest, just, and wise.
Not Cromwell, with his gloomy rule,

Nor Stuarts, gay or trist,
Orange nor Brunswick, cared to know
For subjects thrones exist.
Not all of Marlborough's victories,
Laurels by land or sea,
Could make a nation truly great,
Unless both good and free.
Not all her glowing page reveals,
Her statesmanship has won,
Science or art can glorious make
With half her work undone.
Though every realm between the poles
To her its homage pays,
In people's weal and happiness
A nation's grandeur lays.

Time's footsteps, as they hurry on,
May not at each mile-stone stop;
Yet generations, grown more free,
Each reign some shackle drop,
Till knowledge, its inheritance,
And law divine, supreme,
Our father-land, the Eden be,
Pictured in Blackstone's dream.

All that can chance, 'tis said, in dreams,
Flits like lightning around the earth;
But limbs grown chill admonishing,
Fresh fagots heap the hearth.
And as the genial flame again
The cheerful room illumes,

A sense of comfort came once more,
And he his theme resumes.

Now, in the "Mayflower" cabin grouped,
The Pilgrims sign the deed,
Which, basing rule on equal rights,
Of freedom sowed the seed.
Through tribulations dire, that seed,
Like winter grain, they sow,
As nations ripen to receive,
The earth to overgrow.

He sees how other men, like him,
Grown weary of their kind,
Home, friends, and country all forsake,
In other lands to find.
Many for whom no cover laid,
At Nature's table there,
With wife and child, and all they have,
Hard hand and heart to dare.

He sees the swiftly speeding bark,
Fleets wing their westward flight,
Till where the beast or savage roamed
They gather in their might.
Indians in vain provoke their wrath,
Frenchmen in vain contend,
Their armies Louisburg reduce
Or Abraham's Heights ascend.

France yields the realm she cannot hold,
And prostrate every foe;

They claim their honest rights as men,
For freedom strike the blow.
What need repeat that honored roll,
Who fought on field or flood,
Who, sage in council as in war,
Sealed their brave faith in blood?

'Tis not alone the deathless names
That glory's meed deserve;
Theirs, though obscure, who nobly fell,
Angels above preserve.
No prouder heirloom for their race
Than in such struggle die,
Which gave a mighty nation birth,
First-born of Liberty.

And as imagination paints
Its spread from sea to sea, —
Cities and states of wondrous growth;
Four million slaves set free, —
That little cot seemed all too small
To cage so bold a wing;
He issued forth into the night,
To hark the seraphs sing,
Where stars on stars, in lustrous blaze,
Decked the high arch above,
And, gazing on their circling orbs,
How could he doubt God's love,
Or to his power a limit fix,
Or to his will to bless?

He knew that he was infinite,
And his law happiness.
Calm and subdued, at peace with Heaven,
Sweet sleep his being fills;
And sunshine, when he oped his door,
Purpled the snow-clad hills.

Thus glided by the hermit's life,
He hoped might never change,
When rumors came across the sea,
Tidings of purport strange.
Ten years had passed since "Mayflower" brought
The Pilgrims to the shore;
And now, with many a sister bark,
They bring a thousand more;
Of generous culture, brave, devout,
Women of high degree,
From homes of ease and affluence,
A goodly company.
Beyond the stream, where Warren fell,
Rose one spacious home for all;
And long, before the corn grew ripe,
They gathered in its hall.

Unused to hardships, sorrowing
For friends the seas divide,
They droop and sicken, one by one;
Even their physician died.
Grim Death appalled some frighted souls,
To some a welcome guest,
The wise to Providence resigned,

However sore distressed.
Their barks but scanty food supplied;
Untilled as yet the fields;
And soon to fevered lips the spring
No more refreshment yields.
It was a sorry sight to see,
To make one's heart to bleed;
How could a Christian man unmoved
Regard such urgent need?
His springs and brooks in copious streams
With crystal waters welled;
He gave them all they wished and more, —
Naught but his farm withheld.

Yet all he had suffered from his kind,
He could not quite forget;
Too dearly loved his solitude
To lose without regret.
We found him, when our tale began,
Where now our golden dome
Sheds lustre on our little world,
On many a happy home.
The hill, then loftier far than now,
Looked out upon the sea,
Which in the setting sunbeams glowed
In molten brilliancy.
And as he gazed, sad memories stole
Of all his days before;
Of many a grief to wring his heart,
And disappointment sore.
When left to nature and himself,

Life had been pleased content;
But every fibre of his soul
The world had wrenched and rent.
He had placed implicit trust in Heaven,
And, striving to do right,
Solace, all unexpected, came,
As follows day the night.
If dread presentiments of ill
Perplex his troubled soul,
He fearlessly submits his will
To that supreme control,
Which, thus far on his pilgrimage
His never-failing guide,
Will not forget him or forsake,
Whatever chance betide.
His heart still yearned to be at home;
Familiar faces see;
And all he left for conscience' sake
In lands beyond the sea.

That sea, as set the parting sun,
The gathering darkness shrouds,
Whilst western skies its lingering beam
Heaps high with gorgeous clouds.
Rose, blue, or emerald, every tint
Of gold or flower or gem
Mingled or gleamed with opal change
Alp, throne, or diadem.
It was a glorious spectacle,
And, as entranced the view,
The omen he accepts as sent

His courage to renew.
With swelling heart and radiant face
He marked their splendors die;
His homeward path the evening star
Beaconing from twilight sky.

When once resolved, he, wavering not,
His invitation gave,
Which to that haggard crowd appeared
Like rescue from the grave.
They waste no time, but speedily
Their preparations make,
And, 'ere the harvest moon has waned,
Their way across they take.
The first that leaped ashore lived on
Near a hundred years to tell, —
Her wrinkled front on canvas shows
What that long life befel.

Not all could come, — some quite too ill
To move from where they were;
Bold men explored the higher streams,
Or settled Dorchester;
And Salstonstall to Watertown,
Dudley to Cambridge guide, —
The sires to countless multitudes
An honest source of pride.

But Winthrop came, and hosts whose names
Descendants bear to-day;
Johnson, whose loved remains they bring,

And funeral honors pay ;
Wilson, their pastor, best of guides,
Through thorny paths to steer,
Who left St. Botolph's noble fane
To keep his conscience clear ;
Grave men, in sober garb arrayed,
Matrons, both wise and good,
Young men, of manly form and port,
And fairest maidenhood.

Near where they land, and friends they left,
Some habitations reared,
But what of splendor graced the place
Has long since disappeared.
The marts of trade and squalid want
Now occupy the ground,
Where Mathers, Hutchinsons, Revere,
Once shed their lustre round.
And fashion, wandering farther west,
Affects that region gay,
Where Boston's sole inhabitant
Passed many a happy day.

Their choicest lot they gave to him,
In hearts and councils first ;
Its wholesome waters flow to-day
As when they quenched his thirst.
At equal distance from its gates,
The beacon and the fort,
The country roused against the foe,
Protects their infant port.

The briny currents ebbed and flowed,
Freshening the air around;
Mingling their perfume with the flowers
That decked his garden ground.
His modest home of English oak,
Like tents the Arabs fold,
Thrice moved, before it anchored fast,
Till England lost her hold
On this broad land she threw away,
Not heeding his words of light,
That liberty is simply law
Which gives each man his right.
Her vandal soldiers burnt for warmth
Each massive beam and floor,
Where he had cordial welcome given
Alike to rich and poor.
His brother rulers graced his board,
And many an Indian chief;
That there he Blackstone entertained,
Is not beyond belief.

Our theme is Blackstone's history,
Not that of Winthrop's home;
But, standing on this sacred spot,
The words unbidden come.
He died; and after Wilson passed,
That gifted man in prayer,
Norton, fed his flock, and here abode
Till Heaven called him there.
In dying he a portion gave
His widow, all the rest

To raise another house to God,
And succor the distressed.
Here Stoughton told of winnowed seed,
Sewall confessed his fault,
And pious pastors by the score
The Infinite exalt.
Prince wrote his annals, books collects
Rare and of price untold;
Some went to kindle Winthrop's house,
Well worth their weight in gold.

Here the bold eloquence, that fired
The heart to daring deed,
Denounced the tyrant in his might,
Our blessed country freed.
When dusky form and warwhoop dread,
And steady tramp drew near,
To throw the tea into the sea,
Its crowded thousands cheer.
See Warren, when soldiers rude shut out,
Through open window glide,
His kerchief on pointed muzzle drop,
Shame foes whom he defied.

If Faneuil's hall its cradle be,
This church is Freedom's school;
Both teach its priceless boon to gain,
How best preserved its rule.
Their hallowed walls, in spirit tones,
Repeat each honored name;
Those glorious voices keep alive

The telephone of fame.
Yet in no feeble whispers breathe,
With no uncertain sound,
Their bugle notes stir valiant hearts,
Where any despot's found.
Let not these glorious monuments,
Of word and action brave,
Be swept from earth while freedom lasts,
Whilst freemen live to save.
The Ipswich room, where Norton prayed,
Wrote words to search or burn,
Its shelves and tables all remain,
Awaiting his return.
If anarch ever rule the land,
Or tyrant forge the chain,
These very walls will be a power
To drive them forth again.

We cannot shape our destiny,
Or one who dearly prized
Religious freedom, human right,
Would all have sacrificed,
With Eliot, Hampden, to oppose
Encroachments of the crown,
Bearing his part as valiantly,
Winning the like renown.
But no such opportunities
Lay in Blackstone's path of life,
And long estrangement from his kind
Made him averse to strife.
The earnest faith the Puritans

In daily walks displayed
Awoke an echo in his breast,
On simple tenets stayed.
Though all the land was his by law
They could not well gainsay,
He as a freeman took his part,
Prayed in their church of clay.
Besides his fifty-acre farm,
And six he dwelt upon,
He made them welcome to the rest,
And by himself lived on.
Later that farm, from then till now
To public use applied,
He gave up, all contributing,
To be our special pride.

When antinomians disturbed
The peace that reigned before,
And women gathered near at hand,
On husbands closed the door,
Dared boldly to assert their right
To think as they saw fit,
Deemed grace far better than good works,
Free will than holy writ,
Winthrop would fain the turmoil still,
As other men of sense;
Sir Harry Vane but fanned the flame,
To make it more intense.
The women conquered. At the helm
Vane steered the ship of state,
And would have wrecked it on the shoals,

If such had been its fate.
Blackstone loved liberty of thought;
His views were too defined
For any subtle points like these
To fret his equal mind.
Perchance, as no Rachel blessed his lot,
It served but to amuse,
And heard with patience either side
The other side abuse.

Not so when Williams, Gorton came,
With views more like his own,
And Puritans from recent strife
Intolerant had grown,
And would have forced him to conform
To rules not to his mind;
He grieved to think that freedom gone
He had lost so much to find.
He told them plainly he had come
Of lord bishops to be rid,
And not disposed to be controlled
By lords brethren in their stead.

Once more he had tried to love his kind,
Place faith in Christian men;
He found them harsh, unjust, and sought
His solitude again.
With herd and book he wends his way
Through forests dense and drear,
And by the stream that bears his name
Abode, no neighbors near.

When later Roger Williams came,
Another State to plant,
Religious liberty proclaim,
More friends he did not want.
Massasoit, Miantonimo,
Knew well his modest worth,
Allowed no Indian of their tribes
Intrude upon his hearth.
Taste, if not splendor, graced his home.
In rural labor skilled,
His herds and flocks fast multiplied,
His barns rich harvests filled.
The trees he planted long survived,
Famed for the fruit they bore,
And trace remains of Blackstone, dead
Two centuries and more.

He loved his books, but nature too,
Explored the country wild,
Mounted upon his cream-white steer,
Submissive as a child.
As age advanced, he prized less dear
An independent life,
And, yearning for companionship,
It blessed him in a wife;
For, often thus revisiting
The spot so long his home,
His steed brought back a blooming bride,
More pleased than Jove's to come.
A dozen years of happy days
Of mutual love had flown,

Death took her gently from his side,
Nor wholly left alone.
One only child engrossed his thoughts,
Yet requited ill his care,
For, when at fourscore Blackstone died,
He proved a spenthrift heir.

So says the legend. But portents dark
Shrouded the land in gloom
As Philip struck one vigorous blow
To avert his coming doom.
He knew full well that lust for power,
Greed for the wilds he roved,
Must soon exterminate his race,
Unless that chance improved.
In forest glades his dusky braves,
Their fiery war-paint dight,
Swooped down with yell and purpose fell
Upon the towns at night;
Torch, scalping-knife, and tomahawk
Their ruthless vengeance wreak;
They bravely battled with the strong,
But did not spare the weak.
For near two years, with varied chance,
The bloody strife went on;
Their foes bought traitors in their camp,
And thus the victory won.
The chiefs, who wisely laid their plans,
On many a field fought hard,
Fell martyrs for their peoples' rights;
What nobler theme for bard?

The Narragansett king of realms
None fairer to behold,
Refused to barter land for life,
His faithful braves for gold.
His sole request, — no white man's hand
Should pierce his faithful breast, —
Pequods his generous spirit sent
Where Indian braves are blest.
Philip well knew the cause was lost,
And, saddened, not dismayed,
Calmly prepared himself for death,
Not long to be delayed.
Erect upon his lofty throne,
Between azure sea and sky,
He took one last, fond, lingering look,
Then bowed his head to die.

Blackstone lay quiet in his grave,
But the fierce tornado swept
House, barns, and written page away
The world were richer kept.
The son less frugal than the sire,
His farm, now precious grown,
Passed to a race that valued it
Because once Blackstone's own.
His grandson fell at Louisburg,
And descendants yet may be
From Shawmut's sole inhabitant,
To love his memory.

NOTES.

[*Page* 7.]

The following deposition of Mrs. Ann Pollard is that alluded to as identifying Blackstone's house as situated on Beacon, between Walnut and Spruce streets, on the grounds upon Burgiss's map of 1728, set down as Bannister's gardens:—

"The deposition of Anne Pollard, of Boston, widow, aged about eighty-nine years. This deponent testifyeth and saith: that this deponent's husband, Mr. William Pollard, occupied and improved a certain piece or parcel of land situated near the bottom of the Common, at the westerly part thereof, in Boston aforesaid, and bounded on the sea south-west for many years; and that her said husband had hired the same of Richard Peepys, late of Boston aforesaid, gentleman, deceased, who often told this deponent that he, the said Peepys, bought the said land of Mr. Blackstone, clerk, formerly of Boston aforesaid; and further, that deponent saith that the said Peepys built a house thereon, wherein this deponent and her said husband dwelt for near fourteen years, during which time the said Blackstone used frequently to resort thereto; and this deponent never heard any controversy between him and the said Peepys about the said land, but that the same was always reputed to belong to him, as this deponent understood; and she further says, that soon after the sale thereof, as she supposeth, the said Blackstone removed from this town of Boston; and further saith not.

"ANNE POLLARD.

"BOSTON, December 26, 1711."

[*Page* 7.]

The Charles river, so named for the unfortunate monarch who expiated his father's faults and his own on the scaffold, was called by the Indians Quinobequin.

[*Page* 11.]

1. Chickatabut, whose conveyance of the peninsula and lands to the colonists in 1630 was confirmed by his grandson, Wampatuck, in 1684-5.

[*Page* 12.]

2. Thomas Walford, at Mishawum, now Charlestown; David Thompson died 1628, at the island now bearing his name and occupied by the Farm School; Samuel Maverick lived at what is now known as East Boston.

[*Page* 12.]

3. Merry Mount, near Mount Wollaston, where Thomas Morton held his revels.

[*Page* 13.]

According to tradition, roses, of English varieties, adorned the garden of Blackstone. In "Merrymount," Motley describes him as riding on a bull. This is possible, since cattle were sent out to the colony at Strawberry Bank, on the coast of Maine, to Cape Ann and Plymouth, between 1620 and 1630; and Maverick, no doubt, had many on his island. That Blackstone broke in a bull to bit and bridle, and scampered upon its back over his domain, then consisting of seven hundred and fifty acres, is not impossible, or, perhaps, improbable; but, as his riding later about his new home at Rehoboth, and in visiting Providence and Boston on such an animal of the color mentioned, is well authenticated, the earlier bull may be a myth. The text, endeavoring to be historically accurate, reluctantly refrains from an incident, which, if it rested upon more reliable tradition, would add another interesting association with the earliest settlement of our city.

[*Page* 14.]

The house at the corner of Walnut and Beacon streets was built by John Phillips, first mayor of Boston, and father of the distinguished orator. The father of John Lothrop Motley, when the historian was a boy, lived on Walnut street, opposite the head of Chestnut; Dr. Channing on Mount Vernon, Otis and Prescott on Beacon.

[*Page* 14.]

Blackstone in his vision may be supposed to have recognized many other celebrities, local or world-renowned, connected with the future of his farm, whose names are household words. But too many are living to warrant an allusion to them. Francis Parkman and Charles Francis Adams are too widely known for reserve; McLean, whose name attaches to one of our charities he contributed largely to found, and David Sears, whose generous benefactions relieve hundreds of the worthy poor, with scores of more, familiar from their munificence, public service, and local influence, have dwelt or dwell now within its limits.

[*Page* 19.]

Seventeen vessels came in May and June, chiefly to Salem, whence a large part of the colonists moved to Charlestown. A large house had been erected there for their accommodation on the Square. It was afterwards used for a tavern, and burnt on the day of the battle of Bunker Hill. Dr. Gager died on the 2d, and Isaac Johnson, whose wife was the Lady Arbella, daughter of the Earl of Lincoln, on the 30th of September; but he was buried in the King's Chapel burying-ground.

[*Page* 22.]

North Square was till recent days the centre of many handsome residences — Hutchinson's and Sir Henry Frankland's being the most costly and memorable.

[*Page* 23.]

The lot assigned to Winthrop was nearly identical with that owned by the Old South Congregation before their recent removal to Dartmouth street. It extended from Spring lane to Milk street, from Washington to the lane once known as Jolliffe's, now Sewall place. The house erected by Winthrop stood on the north, or Spring lane side, of the property. It was used for a century as the parsonage, and burnt during the siege of Boston by British soldiers, in 1775, for fuel.

[*Page* 25.]

Sewall confessed his fault for hanging the witches, in meeting-time, before the assembled congregation.

[*Page* 29.]

Blackstone's orchard in Boston was well grown when he left Boston for Rehoboth, where, about his abode at Study Hill, he owned two hundred acres, and more in the neighborhood of Providence. His son John sold to Mr. Whipple, whose descendants still own, or did till recently.

[*Page* 29.]

The story of Jupiter, the white bull, and Europa is well known to classical scholars.

[*Page* 31.]

Canonchet, soon after the battle of the plains, near Blackstone's abode, in March, 1676, left his army of fifteen hundred men, with a slender following, to procure seed-corn at Seekonk. The 7th of April he was surprised at Study Hill and captured, and was carried to Stonington. He declined all overtures for surrendering his own and his people's territory in exchange for his life, only praying his captors that his death-blow might be speedily given by Uncas, a sagamore of the Pequods. It was not so ordered; but, in the presence of Major Denison, the Pequods shot him; Mohegans cut off his head, quartered and dismembered his body; Ninnicroft's men burnt the remains, except the head, which they presented to the council at Hartford. His principal residence, as that of his father, Miantonimo, is believed to have been Taminy Hill, in Newport, his dominions extending over the islands and westerly shore of Narragansett Bay.

[*Page* 31.]

King Philip, sachem of Pokanoket, youngest son of Ocamsequin, or Massasoit, succeeded his brother Alexander as king of the Wampanoags in 1657. His policy was to drive the English into the sea and recover the country for the Indian tribes. Sausaman, his secretary, and a convert of John Eliot's, betrayed his plans to his enemies. Two traditions exist as to his death: one, that he was slain by Church's men, Saturday morning, August 12, 1676, in a swamp, while attempting to escape; the other, upon Mount Hope, as related in the text. Mount Hope, in Bristol, overlooking Narragansett Bay and the sea, was one of his abodes; Long Pond, at Rainham, near the old home of the Leonards, another. Annawan, chief of the council of Philip, and his best general, was captured, August 28th, at Squannecook marsh, in Rehoboth, by Church, who endeavored to save his life; but, much to his chagrin, he was beheaded at Plymouth, Tuopaquin, a noble Massachusetts warrior, captured later, being his companion in death.

As the forms were going to the press, "Merrymount," read many years ago, came to light from an out-of-the-way corner of the writer's shelves. His attempt to render more familiar to present generations what has been transmitted of the hermit of Shawmut would have been discouraged had Motley's vivid and complete account of him been remembered. Some supposed incidents will be found both in the novel and poem; but in the latter they were not borrowed from the former, but suggested by the subject common to both. The reader of the novel will take especial delight in this early scintillation of a genius which has since commanded the admiration of the world. The situation of Blackstone's abode in the book accords with that determined beyond all farther controversy by the deposition of Mrs. Pollard. For the moose-colored bull on which the novel mounts the sole inhabitant is claimed historical proof, and his solitude is cheered by a fawn, possibly no creature of the imagination, but an actuality, as the minotaur, supported by evidence.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 014 076 838 8